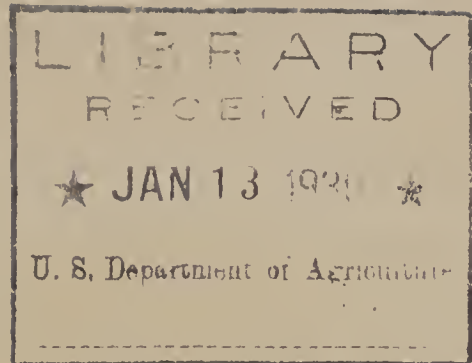


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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio talk by W. R. Beattie, Extension horticulturist, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered through WRC and 32 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, at 1:10 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, Tuesday, December 31, 1929.

I need not remind you that this is the last day of the old year of 1929. Tomorrow we begin a new year with new aspirations and perhaps a few resolutions. We naturally look forward to what we hope to accomplish during the coming year, in fact many of you have your plans pretty well made by this time. There is an old saying that "Hind sight is better than foresight" but I never could see why we can not profit by our past experience and map out a safer and better plan for the future. The present situation in agriculture is well expressed in the opening paragraphs of a recent article in one of the farm journals by the Honorable Arthur M. Hyde, Secretary of Agriculture, under the title "A Business Head for Agriculture. I am now quoting for you Secretary Hyde's own words:

"In at least one important respect, 1929 was an epochal year in the history of American agriculture. It saw the close of the long debate over "farm relief," and the passage of the Agricultural Marketing Act. It saw the setting up of a Federal Farm Board, giving to agriculture a business head.

"The purpose of the Board is to strengthen the bargaining power of the farmers and to help them adjust their production to market requirements. This may be said to mark the beginning of an industrial era in agriculture.

"The farmers of the United States are now embarking upon a new venture. In this, they have the guidance of a business directorate. Their problems are varied and complex. There are millions of producing units... There are areas of overproduction, areas of underproduction, and periods of congested markets. There are also complex tax situations, confused transportation problems and many other problems all of them requiring specific action, but all in some way linked up with agriculture." (End of quotation.)

Looking forward to the year 1930 I feel that a word of caution to fruit and vegetable growers throughout the country may not be out of order. As suggested by Secretary Hyde, there are complex problems to be solved, overproduction and market limitations being the most serious. We know that an increase in production of 10 per cent of certain of our fruits and vegetables above the normal requirements of the country will invariably result in depressed markets and low prices. The production and price level curves of certain commodities, potatoes, cabbage, onions or tomatoes for example, show that a season of underproduction and high prices is invariably followed by a year characterized by overproduction and ruinously low prices.

It has always been a mystery to me that more of those who produce the perishable crops such as potatoes, do not study the economics of the situation more closely when making their "plans to plant" these crops. I had a letter a few days ago from a grower who wanted advice on "how to grow more potatoes." In my reply,

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I said, "if you mean to grow more potatoes on less acres I shall be glad to help you in every ^{way} possible but if you mean to plant more acres, my advice is don't do it, especially in 1930. Fruit production is more dependant upon weather conditions, especially at blooming time, so the matter of acreage is not such a factor in the immediate market situation. But the production of apples and other standard fruits are subject to their cycles and there are periods during which production exceeds normal market demand and the result is unsatisfactory prices. A lot of folks think that if they could only increase their crops they would be all right but they overlook that important factor of overfed markets.

It is my feeling that those of us who are engaged in the production of perishable products, especially fruits and vegetables, should plan very carefully for the coming year. That we should confine our production, with one or two possible exceptions, to a normal acreage, but endeavor to improve the quality and grade of our products. Above all we should not overlook the markets that are right at our doors. Local markets, easily reached by motor truck, often provide a better outlet for our produce than the more distant or shipping markets. I don't hear much complaint from the growers who are loading their fruits and vegetables on motor trucks and taking them direct to market. There is one important market right on every farm and that is the home table. There are thousands of farms on which there is no satisfactory supply of fruits and vegetables grown for home use and where there should be a good home garden.

Insects and diseases take a heavy toll and the control of these pests is just as essential as the planting of the seed or the cultivation of the crops if we want to grow high grade products. Control measures are often a matter for the whole community rather than the individual grower.

The time has come when the fruit and vegetables grower must combine and cooperate with his neighbors, especially those who are producing the same crops as he is. Other lines of business have succeeded by pulling together and why not those engaged in fruit and vegetable production.

In closing I want to wish you all a happy and prosperous new year and to repeat what I have said about the exercise of caution in making your plans for planting certain of the perishable crops which are subject to extreme price variation from one year to the next.

This is W. R. Beattie, bidding you goodbye until 1930 and returning you to Chicago.